

Girl Dressed in Man's Pajamas



Olden Time Muslin Nightie Seems Doomed Among the Women Folks. "We Want What Our Brothers and Husbands Wear" is the Newest Demand. Men Look with Favor on Femininity in Fashion's Latest Neglige

SWEET SIXTEEN stood at the long table in a fashionable shop, in the underwear department, and exclaimed over the "darling" pajamas all heaped up, a rainbow assortment of dainty, and at the same time, sensible garments, "just like brother's," for the young girls do not wear the fluffy night garments that are so fashionable for their mothers and older sisters.

"This is the very first shipment for the season of this style of garments," explained the young woman behind the counter, as she unfastened the parcels so the young girls could see them. They were in dainty blue, pinks, greens, mauves and yellows, and a few in white. Some were made of madras gingham and others were of plain cambric or percale, with binding of white or contrasting colors.

They are intended for school-girls or young girls generally, and are exactly like the garments made for the boys and young men, except that the trousers fasten at the side. There is a separate coat and there may be a little more trimming than on the boys' garments, but the general effect is the same.

For boarding school they are considered quite the ideal night garment as they do not require the careful laundering that silk garments do, or fine white garments, and, needless to say, they are the delight of girls who can have pajamas parties with much more propriety than nightie parties. Girls who are at home can wear them about their rooms in the mornings, just as some of the married women wear the very fluffy kinds at breakfast, and about their easy morning tasks, and nothing is prettier than "Turkish trousers" furled above the prettiest little ankle in the world," as the poet has it. Do you remember the first time you heard the word pajamas and what a lot of discussion there was as to whether it was "pyjamas" or pajamas? And that was not so many years ago, either, if you were over 40.

The word is of Persian origin and its etymology is very interesting, coming from "pay or pai" the Persian word for foot or leg, and "jama" which is the Persian word for clothes. The English usually spell it pyjama or "pyjamas," but it is perfectly correct to spell it "pajamas."

The Mohammedan is one of the cleanest of persons, cleanliness being part of his religion. In his own home he wears a loose pair of trousers, which he calls pyjamas, or his Persian equivalent for the word. His wife and daughters wear the same sort of garment, but there is no jacket to it, such as is worn with the pajama suit now so popular.

The Mohammedan did not wear his loose trousers for a sleeping garment, but no doubt it impressed the comfort-loving Englishman, who had to live in Eastern countries, as a sensible garment, because he could then sleep out of doors with little discomfort and not feel so undressed as with the old fashioned night shirt. The Englishman in India and other Eastern countries having adopted the loose garment, he brought it home to England and after awhile, as it was sure to do, it became fashionable among men in the United States.

Thackeray Used the Word Years Ago.

Away back in the time of Thackeray we read in one of his novels, "I stripped him of his pajamas," which was very near our modern word. In their native courts of India the judges even sometimes appeared clad in pajamas, but the loose garment so worn was not by any means a sleeping garment. The vogue of pajamas has become so great that it is almost impossible to get the old-fashioned night shirt in some of the shops, but just as there are men who still like detached cuffs and insist on having them, so one finds men who will not wear pajamas, considering them "new fangled."

If man thought he was going to have a monopoly of this nice, loose sleeping suit he was mistaken, for it did not take women long to cry for it.

In the first place it is a becoming garment and then think of the color possibilities, so immediately women began to plan for it. For some time the trade, which is generally up and doing at the first suggestion of a desire for some new garment, did not manufacture pajamas for women. In the first place the counters were full and the factories were full of the old-fashioned conservative night gown that women had worn for so long. It would not pay to get rid of them and

what a contrast were these garments upon which women spent so much time in the eighties, for instance, and even later.

The longer the night dress and the more elaborate the trimming the better satisfied were those who wore it. Heavy muslin was used and sometimes, very economical women went so far as to buy unbleached muslin of a fine quality and either bleach it before wearing or hope to bleach it by continuous wearing. It certainly "wore," there is no question about that, and its wearing qualities are the only thing in connection with it that make women sigh for something of its kind when they see the havoc that a few washings make in the thin material of the present day.

This old-fashioned night gown was always made high necked and long sleeved. The "yoke" and neck ruffle were generally of cambric or some fine material and one's best "nighties" were of fine cambric or linen. These best garments were generally very lavishly embroidered and trimmed with lace, but the type of garment was the same and it was a great innovation to have a Dutch or other low-necked gown.

Modesty seemed to require that the form of woman should be very carefully swathed in voluminous folds of cambric or muslin just as in her daytime dress she must have all sorts of "undies" that she would not think of wearing today. The "new" woman of the 70s did rebel a little bit, and decided to wear bloomers, and a few women had the courage to wear what was a very ugly kind of dress. It was not popular because it was not beautiful, but neither is the Motor Corps uniform of the present day, and yet

the women wear it, and delight in it, not only because it is war time, but because they really like the freedom and devoutly hope that it will continue to be worn for a long time, notwithstanding the fact that it is considered ugly and unbecoming to most women.

The women who wore bloomers were considered only a shade above the Dr. Mary Walker type of woman, but trousers and coats did not become popular because it is the most inartistic dress ever worn and because it is against the law for a woman to wear it. Dr. Mary Walker, because of the necessities of war, was given permission during the civil war to wear trousers, and continued until her death a few months ago to dress like a man.

Married Women First to Take Up With New Fad.

But quite naturally when men found something that was really comfortable and at the same time artistic, or capable of being made so, women were quick to seize the opportunity to take it for themselves. Of course the women whose husbands wore pajamas were the first ones to try them and find them just "too nice for any use." It did not take long to persuade the men to let them wear their old ones or their new ones for that matter. Probably one man looked with approval upon his wife when she first presented herself to him in pajamas and decided that the best way to solve the difficulty was to buy them for her, so when he got a supply for himself he bought the garments for his wife, usually of a contrasting color, that they might not get them mixed in case they were very nearly of the same

size. The result was that mother showed her pajamas to the other mothers and very soon the daughters caught the faver and the trade had to make a supply to meet the demand.

Men have always been very chary about adopting a garment that women wear. No man wants to be a "squeaky" woman in any sense of the word and this dislike for women's garments is inbred in the boy. In fact, as a child, he is much more vehement in his expression of detestation of things feminine than he is in mature age.

Not very long ago, some few weeks ago, indeed, a little boy was promoted from the nightie state of existence to that of pajamas. His nighties were given to some one else, and as he only had two pairs of pajamas, it happened one night that the laundry not having come home he was without pajamas.

"What in the world will you do," he asked his mother, "if I can't have my pajamas?"

"You will have to wear one of Mary's night gowns," his mother said.

"I will not," declared the boy. His mother brought the night dress and tried to persuade him to put it on.

"I will not!" he screamed and kicked and acted as only a naughty boy can act. "Then tell me," said mother, "what will you do? What do you want to do, if you won't wear Mary's night gown?"

"I'll go to bed in the raw," roared the young man, and he would have gone to bed in the "raw" if his father had not suggested that he might wear a pair of his, so by means of safety pins his daddy's pajamas were rolled and folded and he slept in peace. He is typical of the male part of the genus man who is still convinced from birth that he is the superior part and that it

is a lowering of his dignity to wear anything belonging to a woman, or that he can allow a woman in any way to pay for or otherwise provide for his personal belongings. It is a matter of honor with most men not to be under obligations to any woman, and a sign of such obligation would be his willingness to wear her clothes.

The small boy hates curls and he hates with all his heart the skirts of his babyhood as soon as he is able to understand anything about them. The happiest day in the little boy's life is when he sheds his skirts and steps forth an embryo man, in the imitation habilliment of one.

Women of United States Send Far For Embroideries.

During the first years of the United States' occupation of the Philippine Islands there was a great interest in the beautiful embroideries that are done on those islands. It was no unusual thing for women of this country to send to their friends in the Philippines to bring them home beautiful garments. This was the first blow to the very heavy night garments that were worn, as the material out of which the Philippine garments were made was so much finer and daintier.

Of course, there has been a great change in the kind of garments that it is necessary to wear within the last twenty years, because of the superior means of heating the houses.

In old Colonial days the big fireplace was a very picturesque part of the house, but it did not heat the house like the furnace of today or even like the baseburner or other kind of stove. To revel in a huge fireplace meant that those who surrounded it sat in the glare and had their faces burned while their backs were freezing. After an evening spent about the fireplace the fire was "banked" for the night and generally they all went to bed in the cold, through draughty halls and into bedrooms where a stick or two might burn on the hearth while one was getting dressed, but it soon died down. Of course, heavy night dresses and even flannel night dresses were worn. Night caps were also worn, as one could not keep the head under the clothes all night, and this was a protection. Old men and women wore flannel night caps and the younger women wore dainty affairs of muslin and lace or cambric and lawn.

You remember Goldsmith in describing an author's bed-chamber wrote:

"A night cap decked his brow instead of hay,
A cap by night—a stocking all the day."

The woman who was "above rubies" and looked well to the ways of her household, however, never let her lord and master wear an old stocking on his head at night. He had his nice

flannel night cap and also one of his own making every night, in those blessed days before one had ever heard of prohibition. The lady herself sometimes "took a night cap," otherwise a glass of toddy at the suggestion of her husband, because one was almost justified in doing anything to keep warm. Of course, they tell us in these days of scientific discovery that a glass of toddy makes you only think that you are warm and that you are really colder than before taking it. But, however that may be, it is easily seen that cold houses had something to do with the nighttime dress of men and women in olden times—and not so very far away times, either. Warming pans, hot-water bottles and other aids to comfort were sought besides bed stockings and a flannel petticoat. When one got up in the mornings in those old colonial houses he had to break the water in the pitcher and his breath went forth like steam, so it is no wonder that he was glad he had a woolen night cap and a woolen night gown, which he could wear while he started the bedroom fire and then dress before going down to thaw out the stove and start the kitchen fire. His wife was glad of the voluminous gown she wore and of the flannel petticoats fastened about her waist when she began to dress. Red flannel was the favorite kind and it was supposed because of its color to ward off rheumatism and to be more hygienic than flannel of any other color.

Few Clothes In Day-time Mean Few at Night.

Now a young woman, and older one, too, for that matter, as there is little difference in the way women dress, wears a pair of tights and a camisole and that is every bit of clothing she wears under her dress, as a general thing, with the exception of the silken garment next to the skin. Naturally a woman who dresses with so few clothes in the daytime will naturally want few at night.

In the old colonial houses if there was a crack any place it was plugged up and at the beginning of the winter the windows were all nailed down. There was no fresh air in the homes of the eighteenth and a great part of the nineteenth century. Now the windows are thrown wide open at night, but the furnace heat is retained and light night dresses are sufficient covering. If the sleeping porch is used there is a peaked cap that covers the head and a garment like a bathing robe is thrown over the night dress.

But it is interesting to wander through the aisles of the underwear departments of the shops and think of the differences between the night wear of the girls of today and those of the girls of fifty years ago as shown by the display and we crave your patience, gentle reader, while we show you a few of "em."